

BHARTṚHARI

Bhartṛhari has discussed time: What it is and how it functions, in section IX of Kāṇḍa III of his Vākyapadīya. This section, herein termed the *Kāla Samuddēśa* contains 114 *Kārikās*. Of these the first 79 *Kārikās* deal with the philosophical views held about time by the various schools of thought, and with the nature and function of time as understood by Bhartṛhari himself, and the rest offer well-reasoned justification for the various uses of the tenses in Pāṇini's Grammar, and serve to elucidate the pertinent passages in the Bhāṣya. Before we reproduce here and discuss the various other theories about time recorded by Bhartṛhari, we propose to put down what this great thinker has to say about time, what is his personal view of it, for that must have precedence over others.

One thing must strike a critical student of the Vākyapadīya, and that is that there is no perfect order in which Bhartṛhari presents the various views about *Kāla*. Usually a verse or two are read to enunciate a particular view. This is followed sometimes by some discussion on questions arising out of a clarification of it; sometimes it is left severely alone with a summary remark. Bhartṛhari glides along in his own masterly way apparently unmindful of setting in complete order what he says. No link is sought to be established between the various views; they are not presented in a string; they lie scattered here and there. Sometimes it is his view, sometimes another's. But whosoever it is, it is always supported and never refuted. Thus the *Kāla Samuddēśa* of his is a veritable repertory of the various theories and views that once held ground and still hold it. (cp. *Kārikās* 57, 58 and 68).

Bhartṛhari's Own View

In *Kārikā* 62¹ of this section, Bhartṛhari sums up the three recognized views about time. Time is either a *Śakti*

or an *Ātman* or a *Devatā*. Helārāja, the commentator tells us that 'time is *Śakti*' is the considered view of Bhartṛhari himself. While commenting on III.9.14, he refers to the above *Kārikā* with the words—*ihāpi siddhāntayīṣyati*. He assimilates the other two views to the first, since, to him they seem to conform to the first in the ultimate analysis. We however differ.

To us it appears that Bhartṛhari acknowledges the other two views as independent notions of time, and not as subordinate to his own. The connecting link placed at the head of the *Kārikā*: 'Now he sums up different views regarding the Reality, Time,' also supports our contention. Besides, we find the echo of the view that *Kāla* is a *devatā* (a deity) in the Purāṇas. The Kūrma Purāṇa, as quoted by the Vācaspatya (p. 1986) reads: *anādir eṣa bhagavān kālo nanto'jaraḥ paraḥ | sarvagatvāt svatantratvāt sarvātmavān maheśvaraḥ ||* Helārāja, too notes—'anye tu vighrahavatīm mahāprabhāvaṃ devatām Kālatvena pratipannāḥ' Nīlakaṇṭha, commenting on M. Bh. XII. 320. 109, alludes to the view that *Kāla* is *jīva*.

True it is that to the author of the *Vākyapadiya*, *Kāla* is a *Śakti*, and a *Śakti* of *Brahman*. While discussing the nature of *Śabda-brahman* in Kānda 1, verse 3, he tells us what he thinks of time.

In his lucid gloss on the said *Kārikā*, he declares it unequivocally that all other generated, dependent subject-forces are pervaded by *kāla*, which alone is independent and follow the operation of this *Śakti* in their working.

How this *Śakti* of *Brahman* operates and with what results is, given in *Kārikās* 3-8 of this section. We are here told that *kāla* is the instrumental cause in the creation, persistence and destruction of all things that have an origin, etc.... *Kāla* seems to be itself diversified by the diversity of limiting adjuncts (*Upādhis*) and then diversifies the things in conjunction with it. Hence (being the instrumental cause), *Kāla* is the string-puller in the dumb show of this world. It is because of the powers of *pratibandha* and *abhyanujñā* that this

world comes to possess succession in action. What is the meaning of *pratibandha* and *abhyanuṣṭhāna*? Bhartṛhari credits *Kāla* with these two effective powers. The first means the preventive power and the second, the permissive power. What leads him to imagine that these two powers must belong to *Kāla*? If there were no *pratibandha*, so argues he, there would be no order in this universe, no progression or regression; there would result perfect chaos, all action being simultaneous. Thus a seed, a sprout, a stem and a stalk—all would emerge and exist together. Therefore all objects having origination, though having peculiar causes, must have *Kāla* as an additional contributory cause for ordered progress.

These two powers namely, *pratibandha* and *abhyanuṣṭhāna* correspond more or less to the two powers, *vikṣepa* and *āvaraṇa* ascribed to *avidyā* or *māyā* by the later writers on *Advaita*.

Earlier Interpretation Refuted :

Helārāja refers to some earlier commentators who take *Śakti* in *Kārikā* 62 referred to above to mean the generating cause which they say is itself time. Their case may be briefly stated as follows :

The power called seed, while it permits the appearance of the sprout, prevents the synchronous growth of the stalk. Similarly the power called sprout permits the production of the next effect, while restraining the production of the subsequent effects. Hence the generating cause is itself time.

This is a wrong interpretation and Helārāja convincingly refutes it. He points out that all this is tantamount to saying that particular effects proceed from particular causes, wherever these (causes) are present, and not otherwise. But since those effects take place at a particular time and not at any time, even when the generating causes are there, the additional regulating cause, namely time, must be acknowledged. The various phases of existence proceeding from a series of causes have a succession; and this succession

is a power of *Kāla*, the condition of all being.

To Bhartṛhari, *Kāla* is one, it is unitary. It is because of its relation to motions such as of the sun, that *Kāla* becomes many. The great thinker emphatically declares that things are in themselves neither diverse nor uniform. Time is one (indivisible), yet it appears to have so many divisions. How? The essential nature of a substance is, it has to be admitted, not the object of our parlance; it is inexpressible.¹ When we conceive unity to inhere in it, we say it is one, when we conceive the white or the dark colour to inhere in it, we say it is white or dark; and when we conceive the universal 'cowness' to inhere in it, we say it is a cow; similarly time comes to have the appellations such as the time of origination, the time of persistence, the time of destruction etc., on account of its conjunction with the action of origination etc. The movements of the sun, the planets and the stars which are in conjunction with time give it the appearance of divisibility; thus the time determined by the sunrise and the sunset is the day; so on and so forth.

If *Kāla* is one, how do we account for the various time-divisions such as the days, months, seasons and years? This question has been raised and discussed at a number of places in the *Vākyapadīya*. The author gives an answer to it in *Kārikā* III. 9. 32. The answer is that they are there on account of the diversity of action (*kriyā-bheda*), in external things. These divisions are superimposed upon time and are not integral to it. They do not affect it at all, they make no change to it. Just as a man becomes a carpenter for the time he is chiselling a piece of wood, and a smith when he is forging a piece of iron, but does not cease to be man or get divided into two men; similarly, time is called spring when there appear symptoms like flowers, a kind of humidity in the atmosphere and the charming cooing of the cuckoo. When there appear other symptoms like the falling off of the leaves of the trees, a kind of forbidding chillness in the atmosphere

1. *Vākyapadīya*, III. 11. 7.

a change in the direction of the sun, we say it is autumn. The spring and autumn are no part of the substance, time. It is a case of an *adhyāsa* (superimposition).¹

And, if time is eternal and unchangeable, how is it that we hear of such judgments as: It is good time. it is bad time, the *kṛtayuga* is good and auspicious, the *Kali* is bad and inauspicious? We cannot change time and import external goodness or badness into it. Both goodness and badness are extrinsic to time; they are transferred to it. They originally belong to actions. When good actions are performed, we say it is good time, when bad, we say it is bad time. Time knows no change?²

To Bhartṛhari, time, though itself unchangeable is the cause of all change, motion and order. Every object is governed by the power of *Kāla*. Why the sun rises and sets at regular hours, why the moon shines for the night and not for the day; why the sun moves for six months along the southern path (*dakṣiṇāyana*) and for another six months along the northern path (*uttarāyana*), why the planets and stars move in a particular order—all these can only be explained as being due to the all-pervasive and all-powerful nature of *Kāla*. The coming into existence and passing out of existence, the appearance and disappearance of all objects is caused by time alone.

Other differentiations of time are also unreal, they are merely superimposed. A thing is *not* before it actually comes into being; it *is*, when it has been created. The mind, however, conceives it as *one* positive existence. When we set about putting together the competent means to the fulfilment of an act, we say it is Commencement time. when the means thus put together start operating, we say it is Performance time. And when a thing desired to be effected has been accomplished, we say it is Closing time.

1. *kriyābhedād yathāikasmīn takṣādyākhyā pravartate |
kriyābhedāt tathāikasmīn ṛtvādyākhyopapadyate ||*
2. *karṭṛbhedāt tadartheṣu pracayāpacayau gataḥ |
samatvaṃ viśamatvaṃ vā tad ekaḥ pratipadyate || III. 9. 31.*

But time remains unaltered by these ideal divisions, says the great thinker; the Commencement-time, etc. in the case of a *dvyanuka* (dvad) is exactly the same as that of the Himālayan range. The nature of a thing can neither be altered nor augmented.¹ The meaning is that objects are essentially indivisible (*svarūpeṇa niraṁsā*) wholes, they would indeed be divisible if they were no more than a conglomeration of parts; hence the Commencement-time, etc. does not differ. The component parts are quite different from the whole they make. A jar is verily different from the sherds which go to form it. Even the magnitude, a property, is different from the whole. With the difference therefore in magnitude, things need not differ, suffer augmentation or reduction. Hence all produce substances, all wholes being non-distinguishable, it is not because of them that the Commencement-time etc. of objects of small magnitude or great, differs, but because of properties other than, or additional to, the whole.²

How does the Commencement-time etc. differ then? The question is answered by Bhartṛhari in the next *Kārikā* (III. 9.35).³ It is the parts (different from the wholes) which, if many, account for the greatness of the magnitude of the wholes; if a few, the smallness of the magnitude of them. Accordingly a whole made up of many parts is accomplished slowly, and one made up of lesser parts quickly. Hence in either case, the Commencement-time etc. is recognized as different. Since the parts lose their identity in the whole, the whole is designated after the properties of the parts, and not that the time of whole does differ, as a matter of fact.

It is further explained in *Kārikā* (III. 9.36).⁴ An object does not exist before origination as already observed. Hence,

1. Vākyapadīya, III. 9. 34.
2. All this is true only, if we share the view of the Vaiśeṣika that the wholes are distinct from their parts.
3. anyais tu bhāvair anyeṣāṃ pracaṇḍaḥ parikalpyate |
śanair idam idam kṣipram iti tena pratīyate ||
4. asatāś ca kramo nāsti sa hi bhettum na śakyate |
sato'pi cātmataṭṭvam yat tat tathaivāvatīṣṭhate ||

previous to origination, it being non-existent, it could have no succession, there being no division into prior and posterior. And even when it has been produced and does exist, it cannot be differentiated, its nature persists; hence there is no succession. Succession, as explained by Helārāja, is based on difference, and difference cannot be there in each separate mode of an object which essentially consists of two modes, existent and non-existent while yet in the process of production. The two modes are pieced together by the intellect and differentiated as prior and posterior. There is first an idea of the non-existent and then of the existent, the succession is otherwise ideal. Hence even the sequence in the produced things is hypothetical; much more so the sequence in time, which is based upon that assumption.

Bhartrhari repeats the idea at a number of places that *kāla* is *Svātantrya Śakti*, as for example in *Kārikā* 14. He explains how *kāla* which is *vibhu* is significantly so called, since it urges all *hālas* (*Śaktis*) by its cycles such as the spring, which are comparable to the revolution of the water-wheel.

THE ADVAITIN'S VIEW AS GIVEN BY BHARTRIHARI

The question arises: Is this *Kāla Śakti* identical with *Brahman* or different from it? The answer is that to the Advaitin (as Hari undoubtedly is), the *Śakti* and the possessor of *Śakti* is one entity, not two. The difference is only apparent. The properties (*dharmas*) are held to be non-distinct from the substance (*dharmīn*). This Hari himself says in the *Brahma kāṇḍa*.¹ Abinavaṅgupta also subscribes to this view. In his *Bodhapañcadaśikā*, he remarks that *Śakti* does not want to be differentiated from the *Śaktimaṇ* (the possessor of *Śakti*). They are eternally one, like fire and its consuming power.² To be precise the *Kāla Śakti* can only be said to be *anirukta* (undefined).

“The conception of the one ultimate reality, be it *Śabda-*

1. aprthakte'pi śaktibhyaḥ prthaktveneva vartate (1. 2)

2. śaktiś ca śaktimadrūpād vyatirekaṃ na vāñchati |

tādātmyam anayor nityam vahnidāhakaḥ iva || *Bodhapañcadaśikā* (3)

brahman, *Ātmabrahman*, *Sattā Brahman*, or *Vijñānabrahman* led the exponents of advaita philosophy to ascribe to it a power called *māyā*, *ajñāna*, *avidyā* or *Kāla Śakti*, which is unique in its nature and which is capable of projecting this phenomenal world, the *bāhyaprapañca*". Bhartṛhari calls this power by the term *Kāla Śakti* and *avidyā*. And like all other *Śaktis*, the *Kāla Śakti* too is *anirukta*. This is set forth by Hari himself in his inimitable way in his *Vṛtti* on 1.4. Says he: 'of the one *Brahman* that must be assumed to possess *Śaktis* which can neither be said to be identical with *Brahman* nor distinct from it, neither existent nor non-existent, which are free from mutual conflict (in so far as they subsist simultaneously in the one substratum)—of the *Brahman* which is only apparently partite; are the various unreal modifications such as the enjoyer, the thing enjoyed, the act of enjoyment—all of which do not exist externally like the person in a dreamvision'.¹

Does Time Really Exist ?

How do we know that there exists something that is called *kāla* (time)? There must be some evidence for it; mere belief in the tradition or scripture would not do. In *Kārikā* III.9.46.² Hari observes: "That this universe which is really devoid of sequence (or succession) seems to have one is indeed due to the working of time". The all-pervasive time operating with its two powers *pratibandha* and *abhyānujñā* is responsible for this notion. But for *Kāla* all this *krama* would not be explainable. Then the notion of quickness and slowness too is explainable only on the admission that time exists. Just as this distance is long, this is short, is determined by the pace of the person walking and has nothing to do with the space walked over; for what is far for a

1. *ekasya hi Brahmapas tattvānyatvābhyām sattvāsattvābhyām cāniruktavirodhīśaktiupagrāhyasyāsattvarūpapravibhāgasya svapnavijñāna-puruṣavad abahistattvāḥ paṇḍitaparavilakṣaṇā bhoktṛbhoktavyabhogagranthayo vīrantante*".

2. *nirbhāso pagamo yo'ram kramavān iva lakṣyate |
akramasyāpi viśvasya tat kūlasya viceṣṭitam ||*

slow-moving person is near for another of nimble foot. Similarly though time never varies yet by virtue of an action which has a greater continuity, it comes to be called slow (*cira*) while another with a lesser continuity gives it the qualification (*kṣipra*) quick. The idea is that the notions *cira* and *kṣipra* must have an *adhikaraṇa* in which they could reside and that *adhikaraṇa* is *kāla*.

There is yet another evidence. The question how an action which is over (past) and therefore non-existent could give the appellation *bhūta* (past) to *Kāla* is beautifully answered by Hari in III. 9.39.¹ In plain English, the *Kārikā* means: Things effected by action are called *atīta* (past), losing their identity (*svarūpa*). Whatever notion the mind forms of them in the present, they deposit in their stable receptacle, time, and they vanish, since after being perceived, they become objects of recollection, with their *Śaktis* transferred to the past stage (*vyavahāraṃ svāttam anupatanti*). The principle of time is cognizable only through the *upādhis* of the various objects, and they, when being recollected, transfer their own qualification (pastness) to time. Hence we say there was a jar. This indeed is the logical ground for the existence of *Kāla*, for if it did not exist, there would be no such usage.

Not only that. In the next *Kārikā* (III. 9.40.) Hari seeks to clarify the use of *bhaviṣyat* (future) with regard to things. The external form (*dṛśyarūpa*) of things which are yet to be, viz., things whose 'becoming' is expected when the competent causes of them are present and the image of that external form formed in the mind (*vikalpyarūpa*) are brought together and unified in the stable receptacle of time whereon futurity is superimposed by the transference of *Śaktis*. It is because of this qualified time that things are called future or ensuing. But for time, it would not be possible to explain satisfactorily the use of future with regard to things. This is beautifully brought out by a simile: just as it is only after an image has been

1. *kāle nidhāya svaṃ rūpaṃ prajñāyā yan nigrhyate |
bhāvās tato nivartante tatra samkrāntaśaktayaḥ ||*

seen in a spotless mirror, that one becomes sure of the form outside, similarly we see through *Kāla* the real form of things.¹

That time is an independent entity can also be inferred from the fact of dripping of water from a hole in a jar. This dripping is emphatically declared by Bhartṛhari (vide *Kārika* III. 9. 70)² to be due to the working of time, and hence constitutes the logical ground for its existence. Helārāja's comments on this *Kārika* are elucidating and bear reproduction. 'We observe that only a part of the quantity of water contained in a jar drips at a time from a hole in it and the remaining part does not drip simultaneously with it. What could this be due to?' It is certainly due to the preventive and permissive forces that time possesses; for if it were otherwise, the whole, here the water, which permeates all its component parts, must drip all at once, under its own weight. Since there is graduation in the act of dripping, time, a separate entity must be admitted to be at work here and that dripping itself is time must be ruled out. The dripping is only a determination of time. This dripping, itself determined by such acts as winking, movement of the vital airs, the continuous flow of the moments, serves to determine the time which is other than it. Winking, etc., too, is determined by *kāla* in its subtle form of succession; hence the power *Kāla*, known as *Krama* (succession) is to be found interwoven with all things in a subtle way and cannot be denied.

There is yet another equally cogent reason to believe that time is. How can two actions having a beginning and an end in common, and inhering in two different substrata be differentiated, the one as quick, the other as slow; unless there be an entity in relation to both the actions at the same time? Now all action is a collection of moments. Since the moments do not exist simultaneously all action is *sakrama*,

1. bhāvānām caiva yad rūpaṃ tasya ca pratibimbakam ।
sunirmṛṣṭa ivādarśe kā laevopapadyate ॥
2. pratibandhābhyānujñābhyām nālikāvivarāśrite ।
yad ambhasi prakṣaraṇam tat kālasyaiva cecchitam ॥

possessed of succession, and this cannot but be due to the power of time. Succession is indeed a property of time. It is time that has a succession, and it is because of relation with time that actions appear to have it. Although action is one, yet it is here said to be two because of the two substrata. Hence the notion of *cira* (slow), *kṣipra* (quick) is not because of the unity of action. Because even when the substrata differ, we have the same notion of the one as of the other; for we say: "The jar is formed late, the cloth is fashioned late." It should not have been possible, for there were two actions inhering in two different substrata, the jar and the cloth. Nor can it be due to the produced things (jar and cloth), for they being different cannot be the cause of the common notion. Nor again can it be due to the agent, for that too differs with different things. Hence that something to which the notion is due is *Kāla*. This *Kāla* has to be *one*, in order that it may produce the common notion even when actions and things differ.

Granted that time being one, could well determine two different actions and give us the common notion: the jar is produced late, the cloth is produced late, but how could it, being one, give us two distinct notions such as: it is done soon, it is done late? To this Bhartṛhari's reply is recorded in *Kārikā* III.9.28.¹ This he explains on the analogy of a balance, which though one, determines the varying weights of gold, silver, etc., similarly time, though one, comes to have manifoldness by virtue of the powers inherent in it and determines uninterrupted action diversified by such distinct operations as winking. Or time, the absolute time, determines action as soon or late, quick or slow, just as the hand of the practised adepts determines a particular weight. As the hand is competent to weigh by reason of the skill born of practice, time is capable of measuring the difference in actions by virtue of its own inherent power.

The Vaiśeṣika has his own way of inferring the existence

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1. anityasya yathotpāde pāratantryam tathā sthitau |
vināśāyaiva tat sṛṣṭam asvādhīnasthitim viduḥ ||

of time. This is set forth in a number of *Kārikās* (III. 9. 16-22). The *Kārikā* 22 says that as objects depend upon causes, material, instrumental and others for their production, so do they depend upon a cause for their existence. The meaning is that an object which is produced, is artificial, is from its very nature perishable and would perish as soon as it is produced, if it is not sustained by a cause. And that sustaining cause is time. This argument of the Vaiśeṣika becomes clearly understandable when we keep in view the fact that to the Vaiśeṣika the whole is different from the parts of which it is composed. So it cannot be urged that a piece of cloth (the whole) is sustained by the hundreds of threads of which it is made.

The Bhāṣyakāra's View as given by Bhartrhari :

The Bhāṣyakāra's view is embodied in *Kārikā* 13¹ of the *Kāla Samuddēśa*. It says that it is time which causes the quantitative changes in all objects. It is because of time that there is orderly development or decay noticed in youth or old age. It also tells us that time is one, though it comes to be differentiated by external objects in relation to it. By limiting the function of time to finite objects, Bhartrhari wants to say that eternal objects are not affected by time. The Bhāṣyakāra has expressed himself similarly. Says he: 'That which causes development and decay in finite objects, is, they say, *kāla* (Mahābhāṣya II. 2. 5).² On this Kaiyaṭa says: 'Now we see development, now decay in things such as grass, creepers, trees; other causes remaining the same. What this change (*pariṇāma*) is due to, is time.³ If time is one, how are we to account for the use of such terms as day, night, etc. ? To this the Bhāṣyakāra's answer is that it is due

1. mūrtinām tena bhinnānām ācayāpacayāḥ prthak ।
lakṣyante pariṇāmena sarvāsūṃ bhedayoninā ॥

2. yena mūrtinām upacayāś cāpacayāś ca lakṣyante taṃ kālam
āhuḥ.

3. tarutṛṇalatāprabhṛtīnām kadācid upacayo' nyadā tv apacayāḥ, sa
pratīyāntaraviśeṣe'pi yatkrtaḥ sa kālaḥ.

to the motion of the sun.¹ Elsewhere,² the Bhāṣyakāra declares that time is eternal.

It is interesting to observe here that Nāgeśabhaṭṭa, the grammarian-philosopher does not accept the view of the Bhāṣyakāra. To him, time is neither one, nor eternal and all-pervading. If time is one, argues he, it would not be possible to account for the diversity of effects produced; hence time must be held to be a stream of moments. Nor can time be maintained to be eternal, all-pervasive, etc., for time is said to be the cause of various objects in so far as it forms their substratum, but unless it is qualified, it cannot be the substratum of such notion as 'now there is jar,' and if a qualification of it is to be assumed, then we shall have to assume another determination for that qualification, and still another for this second; and so on ad infinitum.³

The Sāṃkhya View as given by Bhartṛhari.

In the section on the Buddhist's view, we will observe that the Sāṃkhyas and the Buddhists deny that time has an objective reality. But Bhartṛhari records a view recognizing the existence of time, which the commentator ascribes to the Sāṃkhya thinkers, and explains it accordingly. According to this view, three *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are assumed to possess the three powers—past, future and present. These powers do not function at one and the same time. When they do function respectively, they give rise to such usage as 'a thing was,' 'a thing will be,' 'a thing is.' These powers are inseparable and non-distinct from the three *guṇas*. They are present everywhere and are ultimately of the form of succession. The past and future powers remove things away from our consciousness and make them invisible, while the power called present brings things into our consciousness.

1. *tayaiva kayācit kriyayā yuktasyāhar iti ca bhavati rātrir iti ca l kayā kriyayā ? Ādityagatīā l*

2. *ekatvenāsyā kāryavaicitryaniyāmakatvarūpāpattir iti Bhāṣya-lakṣaṇānupapattiyā kṣaṇādhārarūpakāla iti yuktam—Uddyota under II. 2. 5.*

3. *Laghumañjūṣā*, p. 848 (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series).

Things disappear because of the working of the past and future powers and never return. What reappears is a semblance of them; similar things recur but never the same. Yet what we conceive as non-existent has only disappeared and has never ceased to exist. Hence ultimately there is no difference between 'being' and 'non-being', although the modes of existence may differ. All this has been summed up beautifully by Bhartṛhari in his *Kārikās* (III. 9. 59-61.).

The Astronomers' View as given by Bhartṛhari

Others who claim to know what time is, understand by the term *kāla*, the movement of the sun, the planets and the stars, diversified by diverse revolution.¹ That means the movement of the sun from dawn to dusk makes a day, from dusk to dawn makes a night, fifteen cycles of the day and night make a fortnight, thirty such cycles make a month and so on. Similarly when the moon has traversed all the 27 planets, it makes a month, and when Br̥haspati completes its revolution round a single *Rāśi* (asterism), it makes a year. Since it is the movement of the planets that leads to the division of time, this movement itself is looked upon as time by some of the thinkers, the astronomers, whom Helārāja rightly dubs as having a short-range vision.² Though not falling in with this view, Bhartṛhari does not refute it. On the contrary, he seeks to answer some of the objections raised against it, as we shall presently see.

According to these thinkers, action that measures another action is also *kāla*, so far as that particular action is concerned. The movement of the sun, etc., called the day and the like, and the milking of the cow, etc., having a well-defined duration is a measure for another action of unknown duration, such as sitting. It is therefore *kāla*.³ An example

1. Vākyapadīya, III. 9. 76.

2. ity arvāgdarśanāḥ kecin manyante | ibid (avataraṇikā)

3. kriyāntaraparicchede pravṛttā yā kriyāṃ prati |

nirjñātaparimāṇā sā kāla ityabhidhīyate ||

Vākyapadīya, III. 9. 77.

will make it clear. We say : *godoham āste*, which means : 'he sits as long as the cows are milked.' Now, the milking of the cows limits the period of sitting. It does the function of time and is therefore recognized as time.

Now if time is nothing but the movement of the sun, the planets, etc. we are faced with the question : How is it that a meditating Yogī shut up in his cell, with his senses drawn in, as the tortoise draws in its limbs, is aware of time ? Certainly he does not perceive the movements of the sun, etc., or the dripping of water from a jar. How does he know then on leaving his *samādhi* or meditation that he had been meditating long ? When shortly after he has begun meditating, some one approaches and disturbs him, the Yogī exclaims rather sadly : "It is soon that my *samādhi* has been interrupted." How does he measure time ? How can he use the terms *ciram* (late) and *kṣipram* (soon), which are meaningless without the awareness of time.

To this, Bhartṛhari's answer reads as follows : Action is reflected in the mind, and then the reflected (and uninterrupted) moments of action are fused into one concept. This fusing itself is the measure of the movement of breath; hence it is *kāla*, as it gives the notion of time that has elapsed even in the absence of external motion as that of the sun.

The Buddhists' View as given by Bhartṛhari

Now there are certain schools of thought which do not recognize *kāla* as an independent entity. Such are the Buddhists, the Sāṃkhyas, and the Vendāntins. They argue that since the indivisible, unitary time is never the object of our parlance, and since actions, etc., which go to qualify time and diversify it, are really instrumental in human conduct there is little use in assuming the abstract invisible time which lacks all proof. If it be urged that because without the assumed *kāla*, *vyavahāra* (all human activity) is not possible, then they say : Let us accept it as an intellectual construction or a conceptual fusion of the various acts which would account

for the use of the language such as slow, quick, etc. This view is recorded by Bhartṛhari in III. 9. 87. The plain meaning is that time is purely subjective.¹ It is an intellectual fiction. The human mind pieces together the series of actions and the result is such notions as moment, day, month, etc. and the corresponding conventional language. The *Tattvasaṅgraha* by Śāntarakṣita repudiates time in a couple of *Kārikās* (629-630). According to the commentator, Kamalaśīla, they purport to mean that a particular impression (*ābhoga saṃskāra-viśeṣa*) is created in the mind of the hearers when they are addressed with the suggestive words: this is prior, this is posterior with reference to things or events emerging in a sequence. This impression leads to the knowledge that the things thus referred to are prior or posterior. Thus temporal as well as positional priority and posteriority being otherwise conceivable, both *kāla* and *dik* (space) are rejected by the Buddhists. Moreover, both time and space being originally (fundamentally) indivisible neither of them could be prior or posterior. If this priority or posteriority primarily belongs to other objects such as a flame, a body, etc. and only secondarily it is there in time and space by transference, then too they are dispensable.

Bhartṛhari simply takes note of this view and does not refute it, as indeed he does elsewhere. He accommodates a variety of philosophical views. In *Kārika* III. 9. 58. he says: whether time is merely *jñānānugataśakti* viz. *buddhyanusamhāra*, a conceptual fusion or something positive, the truth is that we cannot do without time. All our activities are simply impossible without reference to time; they take place in time.

The Reality of the Present Time according to Bhartṛhari.

Following closely the *Bhāṣyakāra*, Bhartṛhari recognizes the three-fold division of time into the present, the past and the future. This division, he affirms, is empirical, yet he declares emphatically that there is no escape from it.²

1. *Yogavāsiṣṭha* V. 49, 4; III. 60, 21; III. 60, 26.

2. *Vākyapadiya*. III. 9. 48.

All action is cast in the form of one or another of these time-divisions. Time as conditioned by action which began but which is finished is 'past'; when the means of production of an action are ready and the action is expected; we say it is future. When however an action has begun but has not concluded, we say it is present time. According to Kaiyaṭa,¹ the past, the present and the future are merely particular moods of existence. Hence the future changes into the present and the present changes into the past. By existence Kaiyaṭa means not only real existence, but also ideal. It is the tree conceived by the mind and existing in it that is affirmed, denied or produced. Things absolutely non-existent such as the hare's horn are conceived by the mind, and are referred to by their names. This ideal or conceptual existence appears externally as material existence. If words such as 'tree' were to express only external existence, then it would do to say 'a tree' and it would be redundant to say, 'a tree is'. Again it would be a contradiction to say 'a tree is not'. And it would not be reasonable to speak as we do, 'a sprout has sprung up', for what is, cannot be said to be becoming. But once we accept the view of Kaiyaṭa, the use of *asti*, and *nāsti*, etc., has a purpose; it is there to denote the existence, etc., of the thing outside the mind.

But here Kaiyaṭa raises an interesting question: Can we qualify existence (*Sattā*) as future existence or past existence, or as existence of the future time, etc.? *Sattā*, which is derived from the present participle of $\sqrt{\text{as}}$ 'to be' necessarily implies the present. The existent is necessarily the present in an absolute sense; hence it would be inconsistent to talk of future or past existence. But if it be urged that the futurity or pastness of the substrata in which existence resides could justify the use of such expressions as future existence; we say, even then existence (*Sattā*) would not be present. Hence expressions like 'he had cows', 'he will have cows' are incapable of replacement by *gomān*, wherein the possessive

1. *avasthāviśeṣasyaivātītādīsanjñā*.—Pradīpa on Mahābhāṣya. 5. 2, 49.

suffix is enjoined in the sense of the present.¹

The Bhāṣyakāra gives a very beautiful answer to all this. He explains the use of the future, past and present with regard to one and the same existent thing on the basis of its conjunction with the senses or absence of it. 'There are two different actions, one of the senses, the other of the mind. The action of the senses is approach, conjunction or contact. The action of the mind is conceiving. A person anxious to go to Pāṭaliputra says: "On the way to Pāṭaliputra which I am to traverse, there will be a well". When he has reached the well, he says: "The well is", when he leaves it behind and proceeds further, he says: "The well was". In all this, when we have this action of the senses (conjunction), we have the past and the future tenses (with their varieties): when, however, there is the action of the mind, we have the present tense."²

All this is summed up by Bhartṛhari in a couple of *Kārikās* (III. 9. 112, 113), and lucidly explained by Helārāja. The plain meaning of the first *Kārikā* is that existence is qualified by conjunction with the senses; for all linguistic usage is governed by the relation which a thing has with another in conjunction with it. As explained by Helārāja, a thing (*Sattā*) becomes predicable only when we perceive it, for so long as it is not perceived, it is in no way different from non-existent. And, perception is possible only when there is conjunction with a sense. Hence when this conjunction is yet to be, in other words, when on the way, the well is yet to have conjunction with the sense of vision, we say: "a well will be". When this conjunction has already been there, we say: "The well was". When the conjunction takes place presently, we say: "The well is".

Now as the future and past times do not encroach upon the sphere of the present, the present too should not encroach upon theirs, and when the conjunction with a sense has already been effected or has yet to be effected, it should not be pos-

1. Pradīpa on Bhāṣya on 5. 2. 49.

2. Bhāṣya on 3. 3. 133.

sible to say : "The well is." To this, Bhartṛhari gives a reply in the next *Kārikā*. The mind conceives things as merely existent, and therefore there could be no bar to the use of the Present Tense, even when a conjunction has been or is yet to be, the proper spheres of the past and future tenses.

Now the objector says that we cannot speak of the present with respect to things that have been ever-existing, for there is no division of time in their case.¹ For instance, we should not say : "The mountains stand." But against this, it may be urged that the present which is *nowness* is an antithesis of the past and the future. Since things which have been ever-existing have neither the past nor the future time, the present is there by its very nature and in its own right, and needs no support from any quarter. To this the critic's reply is that these appellations, the past, the future and the present, apply only to things which are influenced by time ; and these are the things that have an origin. These appellations are explainable only on the basis of origination having a definite limit. Thus things or events are called future, when the means are present and production is expected; they are present, when after origination they persist; and they are past, when after origination they have perished. The appellation present therefore stands between the past and the future. Where there are no past and future, there is no present either ; for the present is antithetical to the past and the future, as declared by the Bhāṣyakāra.² Since things which are constant have no past and future, there is no present, so far as they are concerned. Not only that. Since there is no time-division in their case, there is no action, conditioning time. Action is a process, which determines time.

To this the Bhāṣyakāra's reply is : Yes, there are time-divisions even in their case.³ How? The actions of the kings (the motions of the sun, etc.) past, future and present, are the substratum of the standing of the mountains. This

1. nityapravṛtte ca kālavibhāgāt.—Vār. on 3. 2. 123.

2. bhūtabhaviṣyatpratidvandvo vartamānaḥ—on 3. 2. 123.

3. santi ca kālavibhāgāḥ—Var. on 3. 2. 123.

explains such expressions as the mountains will stand, the mountains stand, the mountains stood.

Bhartṛhari elucidates this reply in a couple of *Kārikās* (III. 9. 80, 81). Things come to be differentiated by relation with other kings, not by themselves. Hence the standing of the mountains, the flowing of the rivers, etc. is qualified by the existence of other things related to them. The actions of the kings, etc. are said to be the substratum of the standing of the mountains, etc. ; for they qualify them. As the actions of the kings, etc. belong to three different periods, they possess succession and are of the nature of a process; the actions such as the standing of the mountains, by their relation with them, are assumed to possess the same characteristics ; hence the secondary use of the three tenses stands justified and therefore there could be no objection to the use of the present tense.¹

Bhartṛhari offers an alternative explanation in *Kārikā* 81. Actions such as cooking, splitting, etc. are known to have distinct parts—actions within them—and therefore have a sequence in time. Placing the pot on the hearth and the like are the distinct parts of cooking, lifting (the implement etc.) of the action of splitting. But the actions of standing of the mountains and the like, which do have parts but which being similar (non-distinct) are difficult to cognize, are shown to have succession and therefore different periods by the actions of the kings, etc. which consist of distinct parts and are known to belong to different periods. Hence the actions of the kings, etc. being determinations of the standing of the mountains, etc. are said to be their substrata and define their time. How the *Parvata-sthiti* is action, is explained by Bhartṛhari himself in III. 8. 26. The fact of even constant things being sustained by their substratum every moment, even when there is no sequence, is nothing different from origination (*janma*) which is doubtless action (*kriyā*).

Again the objector points out that there is little justifica-

1. III. 9. 80.

tion for the use of the Present Tense when an action goes on because of the non-achievement of the principal purpose, but which comes to an end and becomes a thing of the past, as the agent begins some other action or actions. It should not be reasonable to say 'we are living here', 'we are here performing a sacrifice for Puṣyamitra'. The priest, even when he is busy otherwise and is not performing the sacrifice, speaks thus, as he is still intent on performing the sacrifice, for he has not achieved the purpose, viz. the sacrificial fee. The Bhāṣyakāra replies that action is understood to be present, so long as the principal object is not achieved, it does not cease because some other actions which have their own distinct purpose, intervene. Hence the use of the Present Time is perfectly justified. But if it be insisted on that there is interruption by the intervening actions hence, the action is no longer present, but is past, the Bhāṣyakāra says that even if intervention is interruption, the action is present, not past. When we speak of Devadatta as: 'Devadatta eats' we know that while he is eating, he now smiles, now talks and now drinks water. Yet no denying the fact that the action of eating belongs to the present. If interruption does not affect the continuity of action in this case, why should it do in other cases?

This view of the present is explained by Bhartṛhari in a couple of *Kārikās* (III. 9. 82, 83). As explained by Helārāja, eating etc. is not a single action, it consists of a number of parts which follow one another in succession. This action seems to break off because of the intervening actions such as smiling, talking, etc.; yet it does not, for, unless there is satisfaction, the continuity of eating has to be recognized. As a matter of fact, the whole is not interrupted but the moments, past and future. And, they alone do not make action. The interruption is only apparent, for, there could be no cessation unless the fruit was achieved. A collection (series) of moments ending with its fruit such as seeing, is action. Even when physical action has ceased, mental action such as the desire to see continues till the former bears fruit; hence there

is, in fact, no cessation. The use of the Present Tense therefore has its justification.

There is yet another way of showing how other actions coming in between, do not interfere with the continuity of the (principal) action such as eating which therefore goes on in the present. The various intervening actions, such as smiling are no more than parts of the same action, such as eating, since they are secondary and helpful like sipping, etc. And parts do not intercept the whole. Surely Devadatta is not intercepted by his own limbs.¹

Now the objector turns a thorough sceptic and challenges the very existence of the present. He asserts that there is no such thing as the present time. He argues: Action that is finished is past, and that not yet finished (or undertaken) is future, but we cannot conceive of anything that is neither finished nor unfinished, there being no intermediate stage. Besides the past and the future, therefore, there is nothing else in between.² In other words, action is the state of being effected. In the course of this process, the moment that is past, existed and action for that moment was accordingly past; the moment that does not exist, is yet to come and be effected, the action qualified by that moment is future. And there is no such moment as may be both existent and non-existent, for that would be self-contradictory.

Again all action being imperceptible and only inferrable from its outcome is necessarily past and could be denoted only by the past tense. Rightly an intelligent young thinker addresses a crow the question: 'How are we to define your flight? Surely *patasi* (flies) cannot be said of your flight in the past, for that is over, nor can it be spoken of your flight in the future, for that too does not exist. The use of *patasi* would be justified only if the flight lay in the present. Were it so, we shall have to say that the whole world moves like-

1. III. 9. 84.

2. III. 9. 85.

wise and that the Himālayas too move.¹ That would be indeed absurd.

Then there is a view of the ancients (which you should also honour) that there is no movement in the world ; hence no time including the present. The ancients declare :

The wheel does not move, the arrow is not thrown, the rivers do not flow to the sea, the whole world is motionless and there is no active agent : he who views the state of thing thus is also not blind. The idea is repeated in a slightly different way : In all the three divisions of time, there is no motion ; how then do we say : "He goes."² If it be urged, says the objector, that action is present because it is there as it (action) is a state of being effected, a process, he would say that this too was untenable ; for a single thing by itself incapable of differentiation is not possessed of succession, which is action. A thing is or is not. What is, is not to be effected and therefore does not possess succession. What is not, could not in that condition of non-being, be capable of being effected and therefore possessed of succession. Surely a non-existent thing, devoid as it is of all properties, could not have any succession. There being no third category of things, there is *no one thing* that maybe characterized as a state of being effected and therefore possessed of succession. How could it be then present³ ?

Again, if it be assumed that moments possessed of sequence, some prior, others posterior, constitute action and that this action continuing till fruition must be admitted to be in

1. Mīmāṃsako manyamāno yuvā medhāvisammataḥ ।
kākaṃ smehānuprehati kiṃ re patitalakṣaṇam ॥
anāgate na patasi atikrānte ca kāka na ।
yadi samprati patasi sarvo lokaḥ pataty ayam ॥
Himavān api calati...Mahābhāṣya on 3. 2. 123.
2. na vartate cakram iṣur na pātyate na syandante sarīṣaḥ sāgarāya ।
kūṭastho' yaṃ loko na viceṣṭitāsti yo hy evaṃ paśyati so' py anandhaḥ ॥
anūgatam atikrāntaṃ vartamānam iti trayam
sarvatra ca gatiḥ nāsti gacchatīti kim ucyate ।
3. III. 9. 86.

the present, even this assumption would be wrong, points out the objector. For, the parts arising in succession are mutually unrelated ; they therefore are not at all simultaneous. It is only one single moment that is perceived to be present, and that being by itself undifferentiated has no succession. Nor can it be urged that many such successive moments are remembered simultaneously, for that is not possible ; because we remember as we perceive and not contrariwise ; and the one moment has not been perceived to possess succession, how could then remembrance give you a notion of succession¹ ?

Remembrance apart, the various moments could not constitute one single action ; for then everything would be both existent and non-existent, but that is not possible. Existence and non-existence are contradictory and exclusive of each other. To obviate this difficulty, we shall have to assume a common attribute of the different moments and this is that we assume that each one of the moments is able to effect action. But this would mean that there are a number of actions, not one. For what is assumed is that many moments have the common attribute, *kriyādharmā*, and not that all of them make one action. Hence the question, how action is present remains still unanswered.²

To all this Bhartṛhari gives the answer in *kārikā* III. 9. 89. Action consisting of a series of moments is assumed to be one. Moments having a definite succession and arising in pursuit of one definite object are termed action, which is one so long as the object is one. Although the moments are not simultaneous, when one is existent, another is non-existent, still they are present. For by 'present' we do not mean existent, but 'begun and not (yet) finished.' And that is true of that series of moments which continue to arise (and disappear) till fruition and which are unified conceptually. This series of moments alone is capable of producing action. And this is inferrable from its outcome. When an

1. III. 9. 87.

2. III. 9. 88.

aggregate of moments possessed of its characteristic succession is comprehended as existent, then this existence of it, is its presentness. The upshot of all this is : An aggregate of moments possesses succession. Though it is both existent and non-existent; each one of the moments conceived as mutually related by sequence and therefore existent, is present. True every moment by itself is not possessed of succession and is therefore not action, yet the sequence given rise to by other moments following it, is surely an object of our consciousness; hence there is nothing wrong with it.

The Bhāṣyakāra sums up the case for the present in the following words : The present does exist. It is not perceived like the motion of the sun. Yet it is there. The five lotus-fibres in the inside of a lotus-stalk, when being burnt are not noticed as being burnt, similarly subtle things are knowable only by inference. We use *gacchati* (he goes), for there is action which is present. How ? First, there is mental action, the desire to achieve something. This mental action leads to physical action. Both these actions, mental and physical, prior and posterior, ending with the production of the fruit are unified by the mind which has the power of piecing things together and presented as one action. The use of the Present Tense in *gacchati* is therefore perfectly justified.¹

That an aggregate of moments held together by the one common purpose is one action in the present has already been shown. Now, Bhartṛhari proceeds to show that an aggregate of moments does make one action otherwise also. This oneness is possible, for the mind is by virtue of the permanence of the impression created by perception, capable of piecing together even such things as are perceived in succes-

1. *asti vartamānaḥ kālaḥ | ādityagatīvan nopalabhyate |
viśasya jvālā iva dahyamānā na lakṣyate vikṛtiḥ sannipāte |
astīti taṃ vedayante tṛbhāvāḥ sūkṣmo hi bhavo' numatena gamyah ||
kriyāpravṛttau yo hetuḥ tadārthaṃ yad viceṣṭitam |
tatsamīkṣya prayujjīta gacchatīty avicārayan ||*

—Mahābhāṣya on 3. 2. 123.

sion. Hence when an aggregate of actions with loose-hung parts is transferred to the mind and made into one concept, it is understood as present and one, being identified with the one concept.¹ If this is not conceded, absence of knowledge of the parts constituting the whole would result. It is true that remembrance is invariably based upon perception; but it is not true that things perceived in succession cannot be remembered simultaneously; for if it be so, we should have no notion of a hundred, etc. The reflex in the mind being looked upon as a concept leads us to say that there is one present time outside the mind. Once the present time is established, the past and the future also exist beyond doubt, as they are relative to the present.

ORTHODOX PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOL

Barring the Vaiśeṣika system, and the now extinct school of *Kālavāda*, the concept of time has not been discussed in great details in any other system of Indian Philosophy. Not that it is barren in this respect; as a matter of fact, it is a blooming orchard wherein blossom forth many a problem of Metaphysics. Any scholar, therefore, who undertakes the study of the different schools of philosophy even with a narrow and limited perspective is sure to find himself amply rewarded provided he takes care not to get embroiled in a quagmire of endless discussion. We have studied a number of works belonging to these schools and traced a number of references to the concept of time. On these we have based certain conclusions. They are given hereunder:

SĀMĀNYA²

According to the God-disbelieving Sāṃkhyas *kāla* does not exist. This we learn from Ratnaprabhā, a commentary on the Śārirakabhāṣya³ by Śaṅkarācārya which towards the end

1. III. 9. 90.

2. There are two schools of the Sāṃkhyas—God-believing and God-disbelieving vide Śāstradīpikā: "Dvividham ca Sāṃkhyam sesvaram nir-